

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 0688

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SUBJ: AEGEAN SEA BED

REF: ANKARA 1120, ATHENS 1120

BEGIN SUMMARY: TURKISH AMBASSADOR BILGE DEFENDED HIS COUNTRY'S POSITION ON THE AEGEAN SEA BED ISSUE BY CITING "EQUITY" ON THE LEGAL PLANE, AND THE BALANCE OF POWER RECOGNIZED IN THE TREATY OF LAUSANNE ON THE POLITICAL PLANE. HE NOTED THE "UNWISDOM" OF THE GREEKS' USING THESE ISLANDS TO EXTEND THEIR CONTROL OVER THE WHOLE AEGEAN, AS THIS COULD CREATE A POLITICAL ISSUE IN TURKEY OVER THE STATUS OF THE GREEK ISLANDS ALONG THE TURKISH COAST. BILGE EXPECTS THE NEXT SEA BED MEETING IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS, BUT HINTED AT A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN U S CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE TURKISH MILITARY SALES QUESTION AND THE WHOLE COMPLEX OF GREEK-TURKISH ISSUES INCLUDING THE SEA BED. END SUMMARY

1. DURING MY INTRODUCTORY CALL TODAY ON AMBASSADOR BILGE, I MENTIONED HIS KNOWN EXPERTISE IN LEGAL MATTERS AND MY UNDERSTANDING THAT HE HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE RECENT TALKS ON THE AEGEAN SEA BED. THIS GAVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO LAY OUT THE TURKISH VIEW "IN A FRANK, INFORMAL, PERSONAL AND UNOFFICIAL WAY."

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2. BILGE MENTIONED THREE ASPECTS OF THE AEGEAN SEA

QUESTION: FIRST, THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND ITS EXPLOITATION; SECOND, THE TERRITORIAL SEA; AND THIRD, AIR SPACE OVER THE AEGEAN. SO FAR AS THE CONTINENTAL SHELF IS CONCERNED, BILGE CITED INTERNATIONAL PRECEDENTS WHICH CALLED FOR NEIGHBORING STATES TO SOLVE SUCH QUESTIONS BY NEGOTIATION "TO FIND AN EQUITABLE RESOLUTION." HE WENT THROUGH THE ARGUMENTS (SET FORTH IN TELEGRAMS UNDER REFERENCE) ABOUT THE PROLONGATION OF THE ANATOLIAN LAND MASS. HE CITED THE INEQUITY OF GREECE'S LAYING CLAIM TO VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE AEGEAN SEA BED BECAUSE OF SMALL ISLANDS SPRINKLED ALONG THE TURKISH SHORE. HE REFERRED TO THE "UNWISDOM" OF THE GREEKS' USING THESE ISLANDS TO EXTEND THEIR EFFECTIVE CONTROL TO THE AEGEAN AS, HE SAID, THIS INEVITABLY WOULD RESULT IN THE CREATION OF A POLITICAL ISSUE IN TURKEY OVER THE STATUS OF THE ISLANDS THEMSELVES. IN THE LARGER FRAMEWORK, AS THE AEGEAN QUESTION MUST BE CONSIDERED AT BOTH THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL LEVEL, TURKEY WOULD RESIST A CHANGE IN THE FUNDAMENTAL BALANCE OF POWER IN THE AEGEAN SEA. THE TREATY OF LAUSANNE RESTS ON AMUTUAL ACCEPTANCE OF THIS BALANCE, AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO RESPECT IT. BILGE WENT ON TO SUGGEST THAT GREEK ISLAND ACQUISITIONS AFTER WORLD WAR II AND THE GREEK EFFORT TO EXTEND ITS CONTROL TO CYPRUS WERE VIEWED IN AT LEAST SOME TURKISH CIRCLES AS A "CREEPIN ENCIRCLEMENT" OF TURKEY.

3. SO FAR AS THE TERRITORIAL SEA IS CONCERNED, BILGE DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SITUATION IN THE BLACK SEA OR OUR AMERICAN COASTS AND THE SITUATION IN THE AEGEAN, WHERE AN EXTENSION OF THE TERRITORIAL SEA TO TWELVE MILES WOULD CUT OFF MUCH OF TURKEY, INCLUDING IZMIR, FROM THE OPEN MEDITERRANEAN. BILGE NOTED THAT THERE WERE QUITE A FEW OTHER PLACES IN THE WORLD WHERE THESE QUESTIONS WOULD HAVE COMPLEX RAMIFICATIONS. BILGE MENTIONED THE QUESTION OF JURISDICTION OVER THE AIR SPACE OF THE AEGEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE AREA.

4. BILGE SAID THAT HE EXPECTED THE NEXT BERN MEETING
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ON THE SEA BED IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS, AFTER THE TURKISH GOVT HAS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT ITS LEGAL ADVISERS (JESSUP, HYDE, ET AL). HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ONE COULD NOT ENTIRELY DISASSOCIATE THIS RESUMPTION OF TALKS ON THE SEA BED WITH EVENTS IN THE U S., PARTICULARLY IN THE CONGRESS. HE DESCRIBED THE DEPTH OF TURKISH RESENTMENT AT CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS REGARDING FOREIGN MILITARY SALES, AND THE POLITICAL

DIFFICULTY THE TURKISH GOVT WOULD FACE IF IT ALLOWED ITSELF TO APPEAR TO BE ACTING UNDER DURESS AND UNDER THE THREAT OF GREEK POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN THE U S CONGRESS. BILGE SAID THE CANCELLATION OF FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON WAS THE DIRECT RESULT OF THIS PROBLEM. HE STOPPED SHORT OF SAYING THAT THE NEXT AEGEAN MEETING WAS DIRECTLY DEPENDENT ON A RESOLUTION OF THE U S AID QUESTION, BUT INDICATED THAT THERE COULD BE A RELATIONSHIP.

5. IN CONCLUSION, BILGE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AEGEAN ISSUES TO THE TURKISH GOVT, NOTING THAT THEY TOUCHED ON TURKISH VITAL INTERESTS.
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